

him, with a comparatively small annual sum to lay out, and a building of such extent and magnitude, requiring extensive repairs in every part,—but amongst them we may mention, that the south-eastern transept, through long neglect, and worse measures adopted for its relief (as, for example, a number of massive unsightly wooden pillars in the interior of the cathedral, was found to be in a very alarming condition,—so much so that it was considered necessary that it should be pulled down, in order to save the surrounding portions of the cathedral, but no workmen had been found who would venture on the work of demolition. By an ingenious mode, Mr. Austin removed the superincumbent weight from the walls, forced them into an upright position, and firmly fixing them there, reset the large oriel and other windows, which had assumed all kinds of shapes; and, taking off the massive groining of the roof, re-turning the arches, replacing such portions of the ribs as had fallen, and removing the wooden supports in the interior, restored the transept to its former beauty. After some years, the Norman gable, which had been taken off years before to relieve the crumbling walls, was rebuilt, and the walls are now firm and strong.

The whitewash, accumulated for centuries on the interior of the building, was removed, and the whole face of the walls and pillars restored, including the innumerable small purbeck pillars, which were refaced by a composition made by the architect; and the bosses and ornaments of the roofs and tower were gilded and painted, according to their former state.

During these works, a great number of half-destroyed wall paintings were discovered, drawings from which were made, and are now in the possession of his family. At this time the stained glass of the cathedral, which stands unrivalled for its beauty, was much in need of repair, having suffered greatly from ignorant workmen: but the art of staining glass being considered at low ebb, it was thought irreparable. Mr. Austin, however, undertook himself to restore some of the worst lights, and the vacancies of one or two other lights of figures he filled with new glass,—though without the slightest previous knowledge of the art; and it is told to us we do not remember to have noticed the fact ourselves) that the imitation is so curiously correct that many artists, when asked to point out the new glass, have failed to fix on the right lights.

The most difficult work of Mr. Austin was perhaps the north-western tower. The ancient Norman tower which originally occupied this site, and against which the present nave was built, had long been found to be in a dangerous condition; and in order to relieve the walls, the spire which once surmounted this tower was removed about a century since. This tower had at last become so ruinous that portions fell during every storm, and it gave unmistakable signs of falling towards the north, in which direction the wall of the nave, deprived of its support on that side, began to heel over, and the groining in consequence was much crippled. At this juncture Mr. Austin, by a combination of mechanical power, after separating the nave walls from the falling tower, raised the crippled groining, and strained the walls into their upright condition, fixing them there until the new tower might be built and be sufficiently set to withstand the lateral pressure. The old Norman tower was then taken down, and the present tower erected,* for which the foundation required care, the site having been once a bog or marsh, which was clearly proved by the remains of plants, &c., there found; and lower down, 16 feet from the surface, were discovered the entire skeletons of a man and an ox, in such positions as to render it almost certain they had been smothered by sinking in the soft soil.

In the interior of the cathedral many restorations were executed by Mr. Austin. The old painted organ, the case of which entirely stopped up the fine arch between the choir and the central tower, was removed, and the various movements of the organ and its multitudinous pipes were arranged in the triforium—thus opening the view from the west end to the extreme east.

The incongruous oaken screen and altar-piece which surrounded the choir, and reduced it to half of its ancient proportions, was removed, and the beautiful screen of Henry d'Estria brought to light and restored, and the altar carried back to its ancient position. The present altar screen was then designed and erected, forming a veil, through the fretted openings of which the most beautiful and interesting portions of the cathedral are seen. In clearing away the rubbish for the foundation of this screen, and directly beneath the spot fixed upon by Mr. Austin for the altar table, were discovered the remains of the ancient high altar, surrounded by the jasper pavement, the destruction of which, in the fire of 1174, is described by Gervase, the contemporary of Becket. This would serve to shew the correctness of Mr. Austin's views as to the restoration.

The new throne, illustrated by us sometime since, was the last addition to this cathedral by Mr. Austin. The design is in character with that of the altar screen, and also with a design for the erection of stone stalls, which were proposed to be substituted for the present oaken ones (a design which was preferred to those of Mr. Blore and Mr. Rickman, who also sent in drawings), but which were afterwards abandoned by the dean and chapter for want of funds. The throne was designed, and for the greater part erected, in the short space of about six weeks, in order that it might be ready for the triennial visitation of the archbishop. The ornamental parts were prepared by workmen who had been employed in the cathedrals of Brussels and Cologne, as Englishmen could not be obtained at the moment. It was erected at a cost of about 1,200*l.*, which was defrayed by the late archbishop, whose armorial bearings ornament the interior of the throne. It has been proposed to paint and gild some portions of the throne and altar screen, but we are not anxious that this should be done.

In justice to Mr. Austin it should be stated that the stone pulpit which has been lately erected opposite the throne was not erected by him or from his design, though some portions of it were afterwards altered and adopted by him.

Mr. Austin, to whom it may be justly said all admirers of ecclesiastical architecture are indebted, died in October, 1848, having held office under the dean and chapter for thirty years; and it was a graceful act of the dean and chapter, by which even his death was rendered a continuation of the services of his life in beautifying the cathedral, that they have directed the large window in the north-western tower to be filled with stained glass to his memory. Mr. Austin died at the age of 62, and was a native of Woodstock, being born in "Chaucer's house." It should be remembered, when estimating the merit of his work, that he was one of the earliest of those who gave attention to the restoration of our cathedrals, and began the good work which has of late years been so largely carried out.

"PERFECTION IN BUILDING—A WORK OF PROGRESS."

It is an undeniable fact, that thousands of houses are rapidly built, tenanted, and sold in this London of ours, devoid of anything like comfort or novelty of arrangement, though in a scientific age like unto the present, when numberless improvements are being patented, or at least registered (and none are brought to more perfection or in greater number than those connected with building), yet is the tradesman or clerk content to go on year after year, in the occupation of the ill-arranged and scantily-constructed dwellings with which the metropolis swarms. Scarce a district where, but a short space since, notice boards said, "*Houses taken in to grass*," but now, alas! the fashion's changed, and "*Apartments for single gentlemen*," with houses to let, or perhaps to sell, with the temptation of paying a large per centage, take their place. That argument of the purchase or sale of house property to pay a "*per centage*," annoys me! Examine some of the lists put forth by auctioneers, and property will be found to pay from 4 to 20 per cent.; surely the one must be too cheap, while the other must be too dear. Take an intermediate, say some ready-built

tenements to be sold to pay 10 per cent.; now, without reference to whether they are well or ill built, I would wish the question to be canvassed—whether the materials of which the house is built, together with the labour, and with these a fair tradesman's profit, should not rather be the basis for calculation of value, adding value of land, than by extorting an exorbitant rent in order to make the purchase-money larger? How the houses ever find tenants at all is astonishing, were it not a known fact, that as soon as they are finished, the builder will let them to any one who will agree to pay a high rent; he, intending to dispose of the property, cares not to see quarter-day, to ascertain the stability of the occupants, but is then in a position to sell "the desirable house, let to a most respectable tenant, at a low rent, and the investment will pay the purchaser 10 per cent."

How forcible are the truths of old Gerbier, who, as far back as 1660, said, "Let all owners of houses be prepared to repent, whether they build or not; for it is like the fate of the many who marry and who marry not: let both, the one and the other, lay as it were in a scale their several vexations, cares, labours, and pleasures, they will find this to be true, viz.,—if they build, they must be at greater present disbursement; while if they build not, they are subject to the inconveniences of houses built according to the fancies of others; and when they cast up the sums of money spent in rent, besides many chargeable alterations, they will find that they might have built a better and more fit habitation for them and their posterity." Well, nearly two hundred years ago do we find advocates were to be found trying to teach the public that the art of building was intimately connected with the convenience and comfort of life, and, as such, was most deserving of the best attention of all.

Building is essentially a work of progress, not positive inaction, letting what was before he now but the reducing of a system by which stability and elegance are blended, and also a judicious choice and application of all materials. Many parts of the globe present strong pictures of from what a mean original buildings arose; for instance,—the necessity of providing protection from the changes of the weather led men, in the first instance, to select natural cavities or grottoes; but when a colony of men joined together, these natural dwellings became insufficient; then, stern necessity compelled them to unite in erecting a sort of hut,—and of this primitive type the Indians of the present day have striking examples, being constructed of boughs and trees tied together by bands uniting at the top, not unlike in outline our tents. From this we can conceive the origin of building; and though the first efforts may (to us moderns) appear rude, still they were such as answered the wants of the inhabitants,—more than can be said of many a noble erection built in the age of refinement and civilisation. We could go on suggesting and imagining that the different productions of old dame Nature began to be regarded and eagerly sought after, and that stone began to take the place of boughs and trees in walls. Then the erections first began to have an appearance of regularity and strength; then this was further assisted by the ambition of each endeavouring to excel his neighbour in his dwelling, and this rivalry must have materially aided the introduction of ornament. Then commenced and progressed civilisation, and, perhaps, even proportion was not lost sight of: certain it is that many of the former rude appliances came to be suggestive of ornament. Thus, the bands, encircling and keeping the trees together, when copied into stone, became mouldings. Again, the stone under the tree, placed to prevent it driving into the ground, may have given the first idea of the base of the column. The early knowledge of our forefathers must be estimated by the fact, that bricks were known, as also a composition like our mortar, soon after the deluge.

Look at the ponderous works raised by the mighty Egyptians four thousand years ago! Do not their remains, even in a ruinous state, still show a boldness of outline and a truly impressive appearance? But grand as the works in Egypt were, they were improved upon in succeeding ages by the Greeks, who, though

* We do not enter into the question which arose as to the propriety or otherwise of retaining the early design.